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tion de chasse. This curse, which was of leprosy, was never lifted, to my knowledge, and caused some uneasiness among the Mbuti but mainly anger. So far it has not been effective, either in obtaining the money for André or in bringing leprosy to the Mbuti.

The other case involved the headman of the nearby Ngwana village, who claimed that three Mbuti from the Epulu band had taken a sack of rice from him and had promised meat in return but never sent it. He allegedly employed a sorcerer to curse the Mbuti to death if they did not send the meat. Within a matter of three months all three had died. Two died evidently of stomach disorders that might have been due to or aggravated by poison, which is sometimes used by the Ngwana; the third man died a long way off in the forest under conditions that would make it unlikely that the death was due to poison, though quite likely it was due in part to fear. All three were young and healthy.

There were almost certainly other instances that I did not hear of, where it was claimed that sorcery had actually been used. There were innumerable instances when it was threatened, and also innumerable instances of accusations of witchcraft involving Mbuti. In fact, talk of village witchcraft and sorcery was among the major topics of conversation in forest camps, particularly just prior to and following a visit to the village. Although the Mbuti had no beliefs of their own concerning the manipulation of such supernatural powers, and although they were reluctant to believe that it was more than either a hoax or, as most of them put it, the mere stupidity (*mbafu*) of the villagers, it nonetheless occupied their thoughts. The death or sickness that inevitably followed a curse, happening sooner or later to someone in the same family, was generally accepted by the Mbuti as coincidental no matter how hard the villagers tried to relate it to the curse; but the occasional exceptional instance, such as that quoted, when the three Mbuti died within three months, was enough to cause serious doubt and fear.

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her milk dries up and the child is given to someone else to feed, or if it is weaned early, then intercourse is apparently resumed. The third father, however, while acknowledging this to be the accepted pattern, began sleeping with his wife again within a month. This he did even though he had the rare advantage for an Mbuti of having two other wives. His action caused a major dispute. (See p. 207 *seq.*)

During pregnancy there are no restrictions; sexual activity in early pregnancy is believed to hurry matters along, and during the latter stages is merely considered uncomfortable, and possibly physically injurious to the child and mother.

As the evening settles in, nuclear families sit around their family hearths outside the huts, talking across the camp at each other until they go inside to sleep, or simply lie down to sleep by the fire (the women nearly always sleep inside, but youths and men frequently sleep on their hunting nets either by their own fire or by a central fire). Even when families have retired inside their huts, conversation continues between them. If there is any singing, other than of lullabies, the camp divides into age groups, each building its own fire. Unless there is an *elima* or *molimo* festival, there is no marked division between the sexes.

On retiring for the night family hearths are brought inside the huts, and any central fires are also brought inside unless someone is sleeping by them. When a central fire is broken up, each family tends to take an ember and add it to their own hearth. A fire is not left untended at night. During the night a man may awaken and stoke up a fire, warming himself by the blaze. At such times, when cold, the Mbuti smoke particularly heavily, and as a result they sometimes fall unconscious. They may fall into the fire and suffer serious burns, occasionally fatal, and this is one of the few generally cited causes of accidental death—other than falling from a tree.

On days when the hunt stays in the camp, because of rain or because some dispute has caused a rift, both men and women attend to specific chores. Men repair and add to their nets and make new bows and arrows; the women roll twine and work at basketry. Both may make and decorate bark cloth, a major activity on such a day. A good part of the day is always given to singing, dancing, playing games and storytelling. There is a constant shifting from family groupings to age groupings, but mealtime is the only time when there is a definite emphasis on the nuclear family. Even then, male youths, hunters and elders may take their food to a central fire and

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THE MAKING OF CAMP LELO

For an hour the others lay around the fire, while I was pushed into a corner, and discussed where they would go to hunt the next day and which girls they would flirt with. They poked sleepily at the fire, sending up showers of sparks and filling the hut with smoke. In all the huts around us, families were chatting among themselves in a drowsy way, and occasionally some eavesdropper shouted a suitable comment, bringing a burst of laughter from all the nearby huts. The leaf walls keep out no sound at all, and anything said in an ordinary speaking voice can be heard four or five huts away. But before long the voices got sleepier and sleepier, and finally the only sounds were the chirping of crickets, the soft swishing of the already swollen Lelo, and the quiet falsetto of Makubasi as he sat outside his hut, all alone by a blazing fire. He held his baby son on his lap, and sang a lullaby, half to himself and half to the child. He was still singing when I went to sleep.

The next morning the camp was up at dawn, and before it was properly light there was hardly a soul left about—only old Tungana, sitting where his son Makubasi had sat the night before and like his son singing to the baby on his knee. Kenge said that some of the men had gone hunting early, because they needed a lot of meat to begin the molimo festival for Balekimito and they did not want to start until they had plenty of food. The rest of the men and women were out cutting the leaves and saplings needed to finish building the camp. We went to join them, not far off. The rest of the day we spent making the simple furniture of a Pygmy household.

Sticks lashed together and bound by vine thongs to a frame make one of the most uncomfortable beds in the world. The sticks themselves are comfortable enough, but for some reason these beds are made so that each end bends sharply upward and however you lie on it the effect is worse than being in a badly slung hammock. Some Pygmies don't bother with a bed but just put the sticks on the ground and lie on them, or sleep on dry leaves. Tables are made

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form that enables them in a moment to know the exact number thrown down. And for another the villagers are not so nimble as the Pygmies. When a Pygmy sees that he is going to lose by a couple of beans, he quickly drops them from the store he has concealed between his fingers, or even in his hair, thus by a triumphant jerk of his hands or his head throwing in the winning beans.

The villagers left that camp stripped of their fish, their tobacco, and whatever else they had to gamble away, and they soon came to prefer an alternative route that by-passed our camp.

There are a few villagers that are welcome in a Pygmy camp, but they are rare. Others can come with sackloads of food and still get a cold reception. I have seen this happen; as soon as the Pygmies have divided up the food they send the villagers on their way. But others can come empty-handed and be received gladly, because they understand the Pygmies and the forest. For the Pygmies this is the criterion of a "real person," as opposed to the animal-humans who live in permanent villages out in the open, away from the shelter and affection of the trees.

Any visitations by villagers are temporary, and they usually have some political significance. A Negro chief who wants to win more Pygmies to his village may send out a son with gifts to stay in a Pygmy camp. Every day more gifts and food are sent out so that he can distribute these. It is a risky business because, as the villagers say, "The BaMbuti eat us up until we have nothing left for ourselves!" But if a chief's son wins the affection of the Pygmies, his father will have won a steady supply of meat—for a time, anyway.

One afternoon I saw two village girls arrive, followed by two servants who threw down loads of plantains and sweet bananas, and a sack of manioc flour. The servants left and the girls came over and sat down unconcernedly at Masamba's fire. Masamba came out of her hut and greeted them with warmth, and soon a number of

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women gathered around, chattering away gaily and asking for news of the village.

The girls were Amina, daughter of an important BaBira subchief, and her cousin. Her father was hoping, she said, that she might be allowed to stay for a few days and bring him back some meat. She obviously knew the Pygmies well, because without waiting to be asked she distributed the plantains. She said she would keep the manioc flour until the meat began to come in. Apparently she was well liked, because as soon as people heard of her presence they came over to shake her hand, in the manner of villagers, grasping each other's wrists. Kenge told me all about her, and said that her father was one of the least animal-like villagers. He asked me which of the two girls I thought looked the more attractive. I said Amina, without a doubt. She was the most beautiful girl I had seen in a long time; the BaBira are by no means noted for their good looks. Amina was tall and a warm brown in color. She carried herself with the inborn grace of Bantu women; her eyes were deep and thoughtful; her expression was kind and gentle. Yes, she was certainly the more beautiful of the two. Kenge nodded thoughtfully and changed the conversation.

That night I sat up late with the men, and when I went back to my hut I was surprised not to see any bachelors sleeping on the floor as they usually did. But three logs were placed beside the bed and were glowing cheerfully. I sat down on the edge of the bed and found, as I had expected, that Kenge had curled up in my blanket. He was considerate enough, on such occasions, not to take my blanket onto the floor, but rather to take half of the bed. So I crawled in beside him and was about to say something when I realized that the body beside me was considerably taller than Kenge, and very differently shaped. It was Amina.

It was a difficult moment, but I could see the whole situation at once. I had become the center of a nice political maneuver. The

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men held out for the village, the older for the forest. All the older men except Tungana, that is. That wily old grandfather thought the village was better as they might be able to make money out of tourists who would pay to see them dance. Tourists had been increasing in number ever since the Animal Station had been established at Epulu, and the Pygmies found tourists even easier to trick than villagers.

It was eventually decided that the elima, which had already begun in Kondabate's hut, should go to the village and take over Ekianga's house, as it was the biggest and he was related to one of the girls anyway. The villagers would give food to the elima. Asofalinda would be in charge. Everyone else would stay a while longer in the forest. Then they would bring the molimo to the village one night and have a final dance there, because the villagers believed that a period of mourning, which is how they regarded the molimo, should end with a ritual feast, and so they would give the Pygmies more food. That would put all the men in a good humor to attend to their part of the elima festivities.

I was a little surprised that they should even think of bringing the molimo to the village. Moke told me not to worry, that no villagers would know anything of what went on in the forest, and if any villagers came to watch they would only see the Pygmies imitating what the villagers do themselves. But he shook his head and added, "Even so, it *is* bad. It is a thing of the forest, and it should end there. Perhaps we shall have to end it twice."

The night before we were due to move back to the village everyone was very quiet. The women prepared the food for the evening meal without talking to one another. Tungana sat outside his hut, hunched forward, his gray old head resting on one hand because he had an abscess on the side of his neck. Moke wandered restlessly from one end of the camp to the other, and Masisi snapped at everyone who gave him an excuse. This was some three months after

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the molimo had begun, and we were in a camp much closer to the village than we had been at Apa Lelo . . . Only about two hours' walk away. Cephu, as usual, had his camp at a distance, but rather farther removed than usual, and we saw less of him than ever. The next morning we found that he had abandoned his camp the night before and gone to join a hunting group farther to the west; he wanted no part of returning to the village.

Even the children were depressed and sat around in silent little groups fitfully playing with spinning tops made from slices of forest nuts. Every now and again one of them got in the way of an adult and was severely smacked. His cries brought only a sterner cuffing, and by nightfall the camp was filled with wailing children and bad-tempered adults. Only the youths seemed cheerful. For them the village meant tobacco, palm wine, the wild erotic dancing the Pygmies love to perform for the villagers, and a relaxation from the tensions of the forest. They would no longer be hunting, so they would be free from the restrictions that way of life imposed. They would no longer be in the forest, so they would be free from its ever-present authority. If the villagers thought the BaMbuti then came under their authority, that was their mistake.

While the youths dreamed of the fun they were going to have, particularly with the girls in the elima house, all the adults were silent. Kenge, who although he was older still liked to associate with the youths, stood boastfully in the middle of a group of admirers and talked of all the village girls he was going to sleep with. And not only one a night, but two, three, perhaps even thirty. "And I am going to drink palm wine until there is no more to drink. I am going to steal all the palm wine there is in the village and drink it all myself, to make me strong. But I won't get drunk, so when they come to me and say, 'Kenge, why have you drunken all our palm wine?' I shall just say, 'You committer of incest' "—Kenge had a very descriptive word for this—" 'if I had drunk all your palm wine

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would I be able to stand?' And I shall give them money to go and buy themselves beer."

"And where will you get the money?" asked young Kaoya, trying hard to believe that his idol was telling the truth.

"Their wives will pay me for sleeping with them, of course!" answered Kenge, and he went into a dubious pantomime illustrating just how he was going to do this.

Manyalibo, who had been more morose than anyone else, and who was lying on his hunting net at the kumamolimo, propped himself up and shouted across the camp. "You, Teleabo Kenge, you speak of the great man you are going to be when you get to the village. How is it that you cannot be such a man here in the forest? Why do you spend all your time with children? Why do you leave the molimo at night and go to sleep like a suckling baby? How long have you been out of your mother's stomach? Come here at once and beat the banja for the molimo."

This is one of the few occasions on which Kenge did not answer back. He hesitated a second, then called out, "I am coming, Father." He went running over, picked up the banja, and started beating them for all he was worth. He called out to all the men to listen to him, not to be so lazy, to come to the kumamolimo and sing. Was not he, Teleabo Kenge, beating the banja? And was this not the last night of the molimo in the forest?

The singing that night was perhaps the best it had ever been. The molimo sang the most wistful songs, and the men answered it with love. When some of the youngsters began to dance Moke shook his head and told them to leave that for the village. Tonight was for singing. And just before dawn, when the molimo was about to leave the fireside, it sang to each of us in turn. It caressed the melody with love, and passed over our heads, one by one. As it left, Moke came around the group and stood a moment in front of each of us. His hands fluttered lightly around our bodies, occasionally touch-

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bleeding, with one eye swollen. And still she refused to marry Taphu.

From that morning on, we all accepted the fact that Kenge was going to continue beating his sister until she gave in, and it was just a question of how long she could hold out. One day, when her brother had been particularly bad-tempered with her she ran away to their mother's home, many miles to the east. I asked Kenge if he was going to follow her, but he shook his head. He said, "Our mother will beat her much more severely than I. She knows that Yambabo loves Taphu but is too lazy to get married. All she wants to do is to sleep with him. She is as bad as Akidinimba." And so he stayed, sitting by the fire all day in a sulk, leaving me to cook my own food and his.

That evening the old men discussed the case by the central fire, with the women throwing in remarks from the huts all around. They were unanimous in believing that Kenge had done the only thing he could have done. Perhaps he should have beaten her harder, Tungana said, for some girls like being beaten. And after all, it was not as though he had chosen her husband as the villagers do, sometimes forcing a young girl to marry an old and ugly man merely because he can pay more bride-wealth than a younger man. Everyone knew that Taphu loved Yambabo as much as she loved him. He had asked her to marry him half a dozen times at least and was constantly giving little presents of meat and honey to her mother.

The next morning, shortly after dawn, I heard loud weeping and saw a bedraggled Yambabo being marched into the camp by her irate mother, Badorinji. Kenge was wandering about searching for firewood, but he hardly even looked up. He just muttered, "Now you will see, I did not beat her for myself alone."

Badorinji led her daughter by the wrist into the middle of the little village. She called out in her loud, musical voice that her son had always been a good son, a father to his sisters ever since their

224 mountain of meat and a free lunch for
171 all as long as it remains edible.

222 **Gathering.**—The gathering of fruits, nuts, and slow animals has a minor importance during most of the year, for the bulk of the pygmies' vegetable food derives from the crops of their Negroes. However, after the evening meal, while the men sit about the fires chatting, the women gather firewood and bring in, just before dusk, any mushrooms and slow game that they may encounter.

[221] The dry season, in January and February, is the time of the ripening of certain fruits and seeds. At this time of the year the pygmies easily could live on the fruit borne by the wild forest trees. It is a period of seasonal abundance and feasting. The [137] ibambi, a big luscious fruit that looks like a pineapple, is one of the most important of these fruits. It drops to the ground with a thud, and pygmies and chimpanzees alike will rush up when [825] they hear it strike. The pygmies often tell stories of chimpanzees that get so full of ibambi that they can eat no more, but hide one in a crotch of a tree for future use; a pygmy sees this and steals it, and the chimpanzee gets a grudge against the pygmy and decides to annoy him in the future.

[137] Next to the ibambi fruit in importance is the baselli nut. This is covered by a tough fibrous husk which can be opened only with a machete; hence, the chimpanzees do not rival the pygmies in this case.

Other gathered foods include termites, which come when the first heavy rains begin after the dry period; colonial caterpillars, which have a later season; and honey.

Pygmy Interaction

• 521
157
571 **Evening talking time.**—The pygmies seem to be a little less talkative

[P.333-B]

521 157 571 than the Negroes, who are, in turn, more talkative than whites. In this regard—amount of interaction expressed in speech—the pygmies are about on a level with white men. There 517 521 571 is little chance for extensive conversations during the daytime while out hunting, and hence the talking time is during the evening, when they have come home and are sitting in front of their huts, provided that they are not dancing.

At this talking time, each family sits around the entrance of its hut, using short butts of logs as seats. Dusk falls. They talk to each other across the circle, from hut to hut. Everyone can hear everyone else, so it is group interaction, even when one person is addressing one other specifically.

Their subjects of conversation are simple; they discuss what they have been doing that day, and in some cases they talk a little about what they plan to do tomorrow. Every now and then someone makes a joke about how a certain man was clumsy at handling his net during the day's hunt. Some people are quiet, others are noisier. [157] Some men are clowns, habitually cracking jokes at the expense of others.

After bed time comes and the various families crawl into their huts to sleep, they get little uninterrupted rest, as they will keep chattering well into the night. Many of them will get up in the night, make water and have a smoke, and chat with others doing the same. There is almost always someone up, someone talking.

517 535 **Dancing.**—The pygmies will dance almost any night when the weather is clear, and if there is a full moon they will dance most of the night. Sometimes they stamp on the ground, or on a hollow log, but when they can beg or borrow a drum from the Negroes, they will beat on that.

[P. 334-A]